

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY	Korea	REPORT	
SUBJECT	1. Civilian Controls in North Korea. 2. Prices and Black Market Activities in North Korea	DATE DISTR.	29 June 1955
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Civilian Controls

1. In March 1955, there was no curfew in North Korea. All citizens were allowed freedom of movement at night, but local police made occasional spot checks. Young men of military age were frequently checked.

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Black Market Activities

2. Black market activities were minimal because of strict government control over the sale of all goods, especially rice and other food staples. Agents of the Market Control Division or the Grain Division of the Consumer's Guild had authority to confiscate rice and other food staples when they were sold illegally by individual merchants.¹ Despite severe penalties, there was some opium traffic. The black market price of home-distilled liquor in 0.72 liter bottles was 160 North Korean won per bottle.²

Prices

3. Prices throughout North Korea were uniform because of the strict government control. Smuggled or illegal goods frequently varied in price according to locality.³

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Sale of Liquors

4. Intoxicating liquors were sold at government-operated stores, at cooperative stores, and in the food departments of government-operated department stores. Frequently liquor was also sold in government-operated dining rooms, at stalls at railroad stations, and in theaters. Retail liquor prices were as follows:

LIQUOR	AMOUNT	PRICES IN WON	
Distilled Spirits	0.72 liters	170	25X1
Beer	0.72 liters	40	
Alcoholic Cider	0.72 liters	180	

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- 2 -

<u>LIQUOR</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>PRICES IN WON</u>
Ginseng Wine	0.72 liters	280
Strawberry Wine	0.72 liters	180
Rice Wine	0.72 liters	120
Port Wine	0.72 liters	180
Vodka (Made in North Korea)	0.72 liters	380

1. ☐ Comment. The Nodong Sinmun of 8 March 1955 reported that the North Korean Cabinet Decision No. 24, dated 5 March 1955, endeavored to control grain transactions by prohibiting the sale of grain not made through government-controlled outlets. The Minister of Home Affairs, the Prosecutor-General, and Chairmen of Provincial People's Committees were charged with the supervision and enforcement of this law.

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☐ Comments.

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2. Although intoxicating liquors were displayed in many places, small quantities were actually sold; probably because of the relative poverty of the people. There were no drunks on streets or trains in North Korea.
3. Slight differences were noted in Ch'ongjin and P'yongyang prices. Two mackerel cost 5 to 10 won in Ch'ongjin, and 50 won in P'yongyang; two flounders cost 15 to 20 won in Ch'ongjin, and 50 to 60 won in P'yongyang.

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